

Montgomery County Circuit Court Research Bulletin

FY2012 Case Processing Performance - CINA

Case Processing Performance - Overview

A total of 206 child in need of assistance (CINA) cases had original closures in the Montgomery County Circuit Court in Fiscal Year 2012 (FY12) (125 shelter and 81 non-shelter), which is a 1% decrease from FY11 (209 original terminations) and a 7% increase from FY10 (193 original terminations). The state-defined time standard for CINA shelter cases is 30 days from the date when the petition for continued shelter care was granted to the adjudication hearing, and 60 days for CINA non-shelter cases from service of the parent(s), guardian(s), and/or custodian to the adjudication hearing. The performance goal for these cases is to close 100% of CINA shelter and non-shelter cases within their respective time standards. The overall average case time (ACT) for FY12 CINA shelter cases is 28 days, and the overall ACT for non-shelter cases is 38 days. In FY12, 74% of CINA shelter cases (N = 93) closed within the 30-day time standard with an ACT of 20 days (see Table E.1), which is five percentage points lower than the within-standard percentage for FY11 (79%). With regard to CINA non-shelter cases, as shown in Table E.2, the FY12 within-standard percentage is 98%, which is two percentage points below the state-defined performance goal for this case type.

Table E.1 Number of CINA Shelter Case Terminations FY05-FY12

Fiscal Year	Terminations		Within-Standard Terminations			Over-Standard Terminations		
	N	ACT*	N	% of Total	ACT*	N	% of Total	ACT*
FY05	258	30	182	71%	20	76	29%	55
FY06	192	30	135	70%	19	57	30%	57
FY07	215	35	130	60%	19	85	40%	60
FY08	173	27	139	80%	21	34	20%	52
FY09	238	34	165	69%	23	73	31%	58
FY10	131	26	105	80%	21	26	20%	47
FY11	169	27	134	79%	21	35	21%	49
FY12	125	28	93	74%	20	32	26%	51

Maryland CINA Shelter case time standard and goal: 30 days and 100% within-standard terminations

* ACT = Average Case Time (in days)

Table E.2 Number of CINA Non-Shelter Case Terminations FY05-FY12

Fiscal Year	Terminations		Within-Standard Terminations			Over-Standard Terminations		
	N	ACT*	N	% of Total	ACT*	N	% of Total	ACT*
FY05	61	34	59	97%	33	2	3%	64
FY06	51	52	39	77%	41	12	24%	87
FY07	48	44	42	88%	39	6	13%	76
FY08	73	43	66	90%	37	7	10%	105
FY09	64	56	52	81%	36	12	19%	140
FY10	62	39	60	97%	37	2	3%	82
FY11	40	35	40	100%	35	---	---	---
FY12	81	38	79	98%	38	2	2%	64

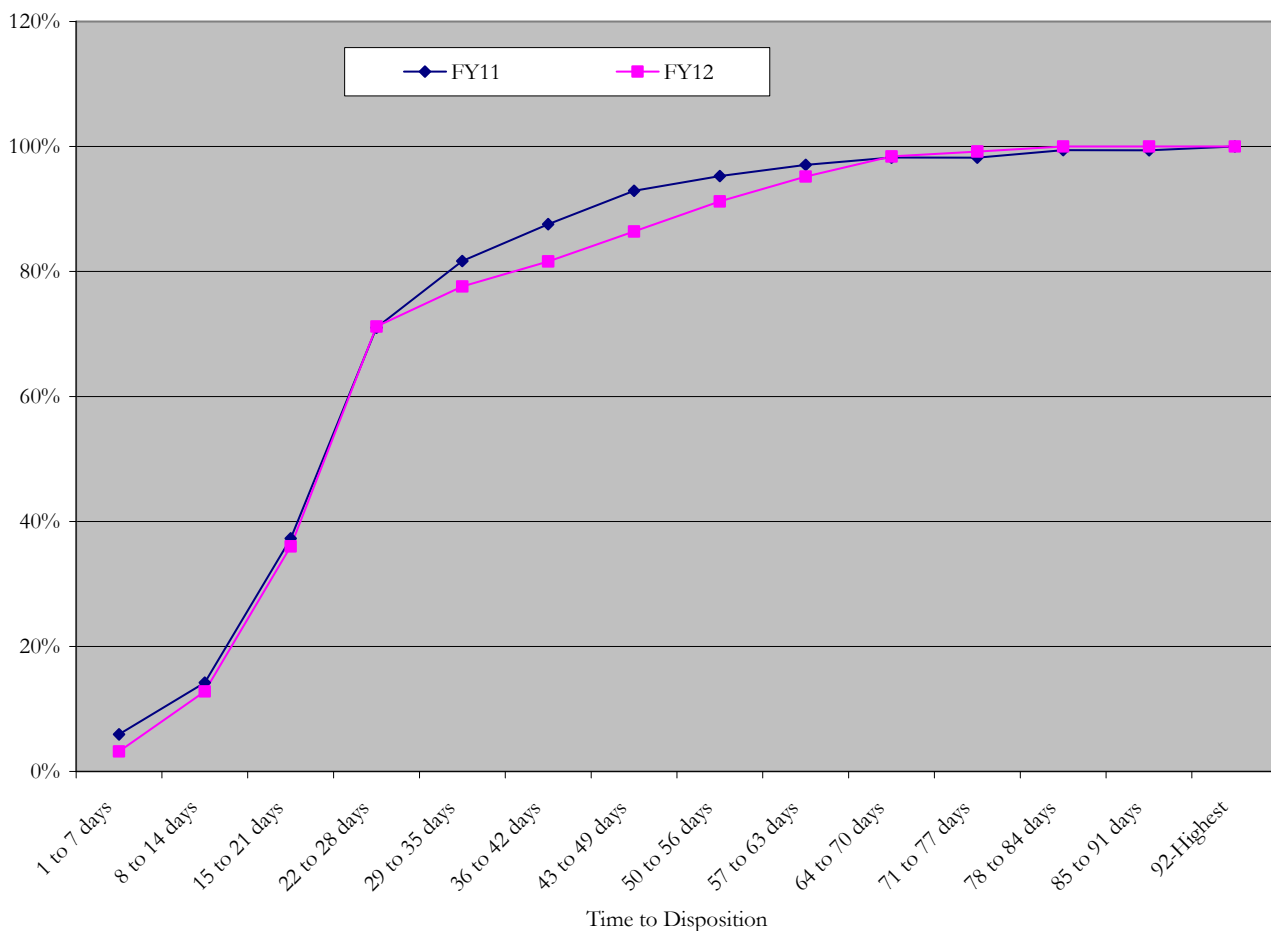
Maryland CINA Non-Shelter case time standard and goal: 60 days and 100% within-standard terminations

* ACT = Average Case Time (in days)

CINA Shelter Termination Profile

Figure E.1 provides the termination profiles of CINA Shelter cases - cumulative percentage of cases closing within specified time periods - for FY11 and FY12, respectively. The figure reveals that FY11 and FY12 CINA shelter terminations follow a similar trend with approximately 71% of cases closing by the 28th day in both fiscal years. However, by the 35th day, approximately 82% of FY11 CINA shelter cases closed while only 78% of FY12 CINA shelter cases closed. The percentage of FY12 CINA shelter cases closing by the 63rd day continued to lag behind FY11 CINA shelter cases. It wasn't until the 70th day that 98% of both FY11 and FY12 CINA shelter cases closed. All of the FY12 CINA shelter cases closed by the 84th day, which is slightly earlier than FY11 CINA shelter cases, which closed by the 98th day. Additional analysis is needed to investigate what caused the observed lag in case terminations in FY12 during the 22nd to 70th day time frame. Given the decrease in CINA shelter case processing performance in FY12 from FY11

Figure E.1 CINA Shelter – Termination Profiles, FY11 and FY12



Trial Postponement Analysis

Overall, 28% of CINA shelter cases had at least one trial postponement in FY12, which is a slight increase over FY11 (27%) and a noticeable decrease over FY10 (34%) and FY09 (39%). Of CINA shelter cases with trial postponements, the majority had a single postponement (80%), which is comparable to the FY10 percentage (80%) and slightly higher than the FY11 percentage (73%). Seventeen percent of CINA shelter cases had three trial postponements. Similar to previous fiscal years, the most frequently cited trial postponement reasons among CINA shelter cases in FY12 are 'Calendar Conflicts – Party Needs To Get Affairs In Order' (N = 36 postponements, cited in all CINA shelter cases; N = 31 postponements, cited in over-standard cases), followed distally by 'Illness/ Medical Emergency or Death' (N = 4 postponements, cited in all CINA shelter cases; N = 4 postponements, cited in over-standard CINA shelter cases).

Trial Postponement Analysis, Continued

Among CINA non-shelter cases terminated in FY12, 30% had a trial postponement, which is above the FY11 figure (25%) and below the FY10 (39%) figure. As discussed above, all but two CINA non-shelter cases closed within the 60-day time standard. Ninety-two percent of the non-shelter cases with trial postponements closed within-standard. The most frequently cited reason for a trial postponement among postponed non-shelter cases is 'Calendar Conflicts – Party Needs To Get Affairs In Order' (N = 23 postponements, cited in all CINA non-shelter cases).

Future Analyses and Next Steps

- ◆ Coordinate a meeting between the juvenile case managers and court researchers to determine whether there are any tools/resources/reports that would be of use in managing the CINA caseload. As an initial step, it may be useful to have a case manager present at every pre-trial hearing and possibly at every Shelter Hearing to ensure that dates comply with statutory requirements.
- ◆ Court researcher staff will meet with Juvenile Department staff to identify any analyses that may be of interest related to CINA cases. For instance, it may be useful to examine mediation outcomes in CINA cases.
- ◆ A review of the court's scheduling system is currently underway to ensure that the appropriate alerts are installed to inform users when a possible event date is beyond the statutory guidelines.
- ◆ Perform a review of the FY13 CINA performance data at multiple points during the assessment year so that review and reconciliation of questionable case information is not overwhelming at year's end. The court research staff will work with Juvenile Department staff to determine how best to conduct these intermediate performance evaluations as the research staff does not want to interfere with the auditing efforts undertaken by the department.
- ◆ Communicate the case time standards with the incoming rotation of juvenile judges. The court recognizes that there are valid reasons to extend a case beyond the statutory guidelines. However, understanding the judiciary's time standards and using them to inform the management of CINA cases may further support the administration of timely justice in these cases.
- ◆ The court has discussed the importance of analyzing CINA performance against newly developed model time standards for state trial courts. These time standards provide an overall standard as well as several intermediate time standards by which a court can examine its performance. Prior to measuring the court's performance against these time standards, the technical requirements need to be defined in order to accurately capture the data used to measure the time standards. The court is currently working to develop these technical requirements.